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AUTHOR Keedy, John L.
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ABSTRACT

In successful schools, a significantly larger percentage of students graduate with knowledge, skills, and a positive attitude toward citizenship and work than students in other schools of comparable socioeconomic status. Using data from the "Tennessee Looks at Its Schools" project, which was based on fourth-grade Stanford Achievement Tests administered in May 1980 to six selected Tennessee elementary schools, this study addressed the norm-setting behavior of principals in effective schools. Behaviors collected from principals and teachers at the 6 schools were categorized into 13 ways that principals set norms. For analysis, any of the 13 categorized behaviors used by at least 4 of the principals were considered instrumental in norm-setting. A total of four norm-setting techniques occurred and were classified as "Human Relations," "Resource Provider," "Authority of Position," and "Modeling." Of these, Resource Provider may have the most potential for principals' effectiveness. Additionally, 35 norms identified in a review of effective school literature were compiled into a checklist; the principals and teachers of the six schools were asked to check the norms they perceived were occurring in their schools. The norm groupings indicated that principals fulfilled their obligations to teachers, respected teachers' professional autonomy, and helped define high expectations for students. (25 references) (KM)

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Norm Setting by Principals in Effective Schools: Implications for School Restructuring

John L. Keedy, Ed.D.

Paper presented at the Eastern Educational Research Association's Annual Conference

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Introduction: Norm Setting and Rebuilding School Cultures

What roles will principals have in the successful schools of the 1990s? In successful schools a significantly larger per cent of students graduate with the knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes towards citizenship and work than students in other schools of comparable socio-economic status (SES). Successful schools will require restructuring, i.e., reorganizing how school services are delivered to students because, if nothing else, the current reform movement has taught us that state mandates do not make schools successful.

Timar (1989) contended that schools ultimately successful in restructuring would be analagous to baseball teams, in which team effort and chemistry was crucial. Roles, currently rigidly defined in the school bureaucracy through certification procedures, would be flexible in attaining a school's mission -- that of student achievement. Timar advocated new roles from all gameplayers committed to school improvement: "An integrated response to restructuring is not likely to occur without a basic redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of just about every party connected with schools: teachers, administrators, professional organizations, parents, students, and colleges and universities" (p. 274).

One major role for principals may relate to their ability to rebuild school cultures conducive to the restructuring predicted for the 1990s. Since principals are the gatekeepers in their schools, they have the influence of their position to help shape new collaborative and collegial roles. Since norms define roles (Jackson, 1966), research on school-based norm setting can be a valuable resource for school improvement and restructuring of the 1990s. Data collected in six effective Tennessee elementary schools in 1981 were analyzed to indicate how principals set norms, and identified which norms were used (Keedy, 1982). In this paper I will summarize this study's findings and discuss implications for principal norm setting for the 1990s.

Methodology

Literature Review

The literature review identified norm setting as a management tool for principals in effective schools, and defined norms.

Norm setting. One component of principal behaviors in effective schools was norm setting. At least three sets of behaviors comprised norm setting:

(1) setting standards of performance for teachers (K. Clark, 1968; Wellisch et al., 1978; and Brookover et al., 1979);

(2) principals working with teachers to set high learning expectations for students (Austin, 1979; and Clark, Lotto, & McCarthy, 1980); and

(3) coordination and sequencing of school-wide goals and objectives (University of Indiana review, 1979; Benjamin, 1980). Ideally the third set lends specification to sets one and two: If teachers are performing and students are meeting high expectations set by principals and teachers, students should achieve the school-wide goals and objectives.

Definition of norms. Norms are behavioral expectations which school personnel find valuable to conform and comply with (Homans, 1958). These expectations are based on values and beliefs of school personnel. Norms are not policy and regulations--sometimes ignored by effective principals--passed down by the central office or state department. Norms, instead, are "the way we do things around here" (Lortie, 1969) for each school--produced through principal-teacher interactions--often spontaneous and informal (Peterson, 1977-78). In the context of principal effectiveness, norms are what the principal requires of teachers (K. Clark, 1969) or Etzioni's "normative influence" (1961). "Principals tend to affect teachers, who affect students (Clark, Lotto, & McCarthy, 1980). The literature search has identified what principals

do to set norms. Field research is necessary to identify how principals set norms.

School Selection

This study addressed the norm-setting behavior of principals in effective schools identified through the Dyer model (Austin, 1979). This model defined school effectiveness by positive discrepancies--or residuals--between predicted achievement based on socioeconomic factors and actual reading scores. Schools having the greatest positive residuals, as computed by a regression formula, were chosen for this study.

This study used data from the project, Tennessee Looks at Its Schools (1981), conducted by the State Testing and Evaluation Center, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Based on Fourth Grade Stanford Achievement Tests, May, 1980, six elementary schools from Tennessee were selected for this study.

Research Question #1 and Analysis:

How Do Principals of Effective Schools Set Norms?

Behaviors collected from principals and teachers were categorized separately into 13 ways principals set norms. For within-school analysis, any category having four or more behaviors collected from each principal was illustrated through examples drawn from the data (n=295). With teacher

perceptions of principal behavior (n=151), this cutoff was three or more behaviors.

For among-schools analysis, any category used by at least four principals was considered instrumental in norm setting. The four categories were Human Relations, Resource Provider, Authority of Position, and Modeling. Four techniques were analyzed as occurring in the six schools. These four are defined below:

(a) Resource Provider

When teachers need things, the principal delivers. Resources are anything the principal can use to satisfy teacher needs: teaching materials, meeting student discipline and personal needs, protection from parents, organizational maintenance, teacher personal needs such as sick leave, etc.

(b) Human Relations

The principal relates in ways that make teachers WANT to comply: They like their principal, his attitude, and how s/he treats them. In doing this, principals set us expectations by believing and assuming the best of teachers.

(c) Authority of Position

Principal pulls rank (acts like the boss) to get teacher conformity. Teachers conform because the principal uses fear, pressure, and unilateral decision making as s/he is responsible for the school's performance.

(d) Modeling

There are two types: a conscious effort. "Look I'm doing it, certainly I can expect you to do it." The second type is an unaware effort that is communicated through interactions with teachers, who then do the same thing.

Appendix A lists the nine secondary norm-setting behaviors of principals. These techniques were analyzed as not occurring in these six schools.

The Exchange System

Of these four techniques, Resource Provider may have the most potential for principal effectiveness (Keedy, 1982a). This technique relates to a concept called the exchange system: Principals--meeting teacher "intrinsic" needs as Resource Provider--ask for norm compliance in return. (Only then can teachers fulfill their psychic needs, producing the daily effort required for good teaching [Lortie, 1975].)

The potential of this technique has two sources. People in general are obligated to help those who help them (Gouldner, 1960). Two, principal preparation programs do not seem to have acknowledged this management concept. Below are implications for the exchange system and norm setting found in the Keedy study (1982b) through the literature review on educational administration) and through field research.

In relating the exchange system described above to the school setting, the more a principal can do for teachers--as enabler--the more s/he can expect in return (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980). Crowson and Porter-Gehrie (1981, p. 43) described a norm as defining a principal's obligation to teachers:

> A fundamental norm of teacher-principal interaction is that of respect for the professional autonomy of the classroom teacher. One of the principal's key roles is the protection he affords the teacher from "outside" interference and the actions he takes to "back the teacher up" in problematic situations.

The six principals participating in the study were observed meeting teacher needs more than any other activity. Many behaviors related to the teachers' needs for organizational maintenance and stability. The principals were meticulous about lunch money collection, distribution of supplies, keeping mimeograph machine in order, etc. The

six schools ran smoothly. No teachers--when interviewed --complained that their school was noisy, poorly run, or chaotic.

These principals also directly met specific needs of teachers. In one school parents had to sign in and wait for their children in the school office. (Teachers had complained that parents were intruding upon their classrooms.) Another principal was an excellent fundraiser. (The money provided extra materials and equipment for teachers.) A third principal was a reading specialist who set up individualized programs for students. (Teachers could go to this principal with students having learning problems.) A fourth principal was skillful at parent-teacher-student conferences.

All six groups of teachers--when asked how their principals set norms--indicated that their principals did so much for them. Two principals explained the system as they saw it: "To the extent you provide something for teachers, they'll do something for you." "My role is to identify teacher needs and meet them. To the extent that I can do both, I can expect teachers to comply to norms defining teaching behavior."

Research Question #2 and Analysis

What Norms Did these Schools Observe?

A review of the literature on effective schools identified 35 norms used in effective schools. These norms were compiled into a checklist. Principals and teachers were asked to check norms they perceived were occurring in their schools. The norms were classified into six groupings whose descriptors defined school roles and expectations. Appendix B shows how the 35 norms were grouped for analysis. The two columns to the right indicate, respectively, how many of the six principals and what percentage of the 98 teachers in the six schools perceived each norm to occur.

The analysis compared principals and teachers as groups: At least four of the six principals and 70 percent of teachers had to agree on at least two thirds of the norms for there to be commonalty of agreement. Norm setting in schools is a product of principal-teacher interaction. A principal, therefore, cannot set norms without a reasonable degree of principal-teacher agreement. Foskett (1967), however, concluded that norms were ambiguous and prone to perceptual problems. Cutoff criteria for agreement (two thirds or 70 percent) compensated accordingly for these problems. That is, some respondents might have failed to perceive norms actually occurring. Each grouping was analyzed separately and follows below. Table 1 summarizes these data.

Table 1

Summary of Between-Groups Analysis

	Grouping Number and Descriptor	Prins.	Tchs.	Commonality of Agreement
One	Norms defining: principal's obligations to teachers	X	X	X
Two	Norms defining: teacher behavior as professional educator	X	X	X
Three	Norms defining: school's high expectations for students	X	X	X
Four	Norms defining: how principals affect teachers who affect students	X		
Five	Norms defining: a principal's authority of position	X		
Six	Norms defining: school climate	X		

An "X" shows that either at least four of six principals or 70 percent of teachers agreed with two thirds of norms of that norm grouping. When both principals and teachers agreed, there was commonality of agreement.

Grouping One: Principal's Obligations to Teachers

Principals and teachers both agreed with this grouping. Principals agreed with all norms but number 16 (principals helping teachers in the classroom). Teachers failed to agree with numbers 16 and 25 (principal should provide as much as possible for attainment of learning goals set by both principal and teachers).

Grouping Two: Teacher Behavior as Professional Educator

Principals agreed with all of these, whereas teachers agreed with all but number 1 (reading during designated periods).

Grouping Three: School's Expectations for Students

Again, principals agreed with all of these norms. Teachers agreed with all norm except number 6 (goals for student achievement sated as behavioral objectives) and number 20 (lack of student effort not to be tolerated).

Grouping Four: Principals Affect Teachers Who Affect Students

Despite principal agreement on all norms, teachers agreed with only number 23 (principals can increase teachers' self-concepts).

Grouping Five: Principal's Authority of Position

The principals agreed on these norms. Teachers, however, agreed with number 18 (principal often makes

unilateral decisions), but did not agree with number 12 (teachers must perform or leave) or with number 28 (principal: There's a correct routine for everything).

Grouping Six: School Climate

Principals agreed with all norms. Despite high agreement on number 2 (atmosphere of discipline) and number 9 (teachers do certain things to create learning climate), teachers agreed on only four of the seven norms.

Summary

Principals as a group agreed with all groupings. Teachers as a group agreed with Groupings One, Two, and Three. There was commonalty of agreement between-groups on Groupings: One (principal's obligations to teachers), Two (teacher behavior as professional educations) and Three (school's high expectations for students).

Discussion of Study Results: Implications for the Principalship and School Restructuring

Norm Setting Techniques

These principals were careful not to get on the wrong side of teachers (Human Relations); yet they exerted their authority (Authority of Position). (In fact, in at least five of the schools there were involuntary resignations or transfers of certain teachers.) These principals provided

considerable resources for teachers (Resource Provider) and modeled desired behaviors Modeling); few of these behaviors resembled influence on improving classroom instruction.

Norm Categories

These norm groupings indicated that principals fulfilled obligations to teachers (Group One), respected teachers' professional autonomy (Group Two), and helped define high school expectations for students (Group Three). Yet on norm groupings affecting high student achievement (particularly Group Four), there was not teacher agreement. None of the norms defining principal-teacher relationships that might affect teacher-student relationships resulting in great student achievement (e.g., principal defines what good teaching is) were perceived as occurring by teachers. Regarding the norm grouping Principal's Authority of Position teachers agreed with only one of the three norms (regarding the right to make unilateral decisions). Teachers also disagreed with many of the norms comprising School Climate (Group Six), in particular, the norm regarding principals and teachers setting learning goals for students had the lowest teacher compliance.

Comparison of Effective Schools to Successful Schools Model

These principals appeared to be efficient managers but they did not gain teacher compliance in areas enabling them to exert influence upon classroom instruction. Nor did they

exhibit the norm-setting techniques (e.g., Appeal/Persuasion and Teacher Decision Making/Input) conducive to building collaborative structures with teachers. These six principals appear to fit the "strong administrative leadership" type (Edmonds, 1979). Since much of the effective schools literature has been based on urban, (particularly elementary) schools, principals could take control of schools (i.e., "run tight ships") and student achievement scores per se might surpass expectations (Clark, 1968; Levin, 1980; and Venezky & Winfield, 1979). These principals fit this description: Their schools were observed as quiet and orderly, clean, and efficiently managed (i.e., schedules ran on time). Teachers and principals agreed on norms defining expectations for teachers and students but not on norms defining principal influence on classroom instruction or principal-teacher collaboration. Findings on norm-setting behaviors reflected this dichotomy. Techniques included Authority of Position and Resource Provider but not Appeal/Persuasion or Teacher Decision Making/Input. Teachers did not comply with norms conducive to principals exerting principal influence on classroom instruction perhaps because the norm-setting techniques were managerial, not collaborative.These principals were good managers but not instructional leaders.

The "New Principal" Needed for School Restructuring

The model for principal norm-setting behaviors for school restructuring may be different. As we go about the task of restructuring schools, two sets of roles will become particularly crucial: those between students and teachers and between teachers and principals. Inevitably, teachers and students will have to change their traditional roles: Students will become more independent learners with teachers and facilitators of this process. Benjamin (1989) cited several education futurists who evoked not only active learning for students but also partnership roles in which students would be responsible for determining their learning needs. Glasser (1990) contrasted (traditional) boss management with lead management. The essential points of lead management were: 1) the leader engaged workers in discussions so that workers input can be considered; 2) the leader modeled the job so that workers see what the manager sees is the best way to work, but workers continually are asked for input regarding their input regarding best ways to work; 3) the leader asked the workers to inspect their work for quality, and the leader seeks constant input on workers' insight on inspection; and 4) the leader was a facilitator who provides workers with the best tools and workplace environment.

In the successful schools of the future teacher -principal relationships will be characterized by collective

action (Glickman, 1989) for cooperative problem solving and based on enlightened self-interest. Principals and teachers each will have to give up some turf. Teachers will give up their classroom autonomy and relate to each other as a cohesive group (both at grade/department and the school levels). Principals will surrender turf because they need their teachers' perceptions on school-wide needs and workable strategies for improving schools.

New research needs to be done in schools currently undergoing restructuring to identify what norm-setting techniques and exchanges occur as principals and teachers redefine their new roles. Data collected from one study (Keedy, 1990 in progress) have been identified for one participating principal. (See Table 2). As teachers assume a major role in school renewal and restructuring (Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986), do principals use a different mix of norm-setting techniques? Do they use more Appeal/Persuasion and Teacher Decision Making/Input and less Authority of Position? How do these principals distribute their resources? Do they encourage certain teachers to assume informal leadership positions and influence their peers to accept the collective action necessary in restructuring schools? As new roles and relationships are formed, does negotiation emerge as a new technique, especially as participating and site-based management become prevalent?

Table 2
Norms for Principal 1 and His School

1) Principal 1 demonstrates direct involvement in instructional improvement projects (e.g., participation in week-long "personal contact' workshop and an active colleague in Curriculum Task Force).

2) Principal 1 expects and even encourages teachers from different liason groups to lobby (or "politick") and gain enough support for liason group leaders (on the Executive Council) to create a Task Force.

3) Principal 1 is expected to deal with personnel issues (e.g., duty schedule and homeroom assignment) because Task Forces took on both of the above issues and "couldn't make people any happier" than what had occurred before the Task Forces were convened.

4) In the executive council the one-person, one-vote really operates. (The principal is a member of the Executive Council and is the leader of a liason group.) When the shared-governance structure first started, the teachers were not sure they could believe this change in governance (because Principal 1 had been rather unilateral in his decision-making during his first year.) But when the executive council voted 5-2 to adopt the new dress code as recommended by the Task Force, the principal accepted this decision, even though his was one of the two oposition votes.) This action signaled a change to the teachers because they now knew that Principal 1 would be a gameplayer in this new structure.

5) With the acceptance of the shared-governance structure, the relationship between Principal 1 and teachers has changed. Teachers go to Principal 1 less for "backing" and more for advice. With more discretion to make decisions, comes more teacher responsibility to accept ramifications of decisions. For instance, when certain Task Forces are not progressing, some teachers went to Principal and said, "What are you going to do about this?" Principal 1 replied, "Nothing. This is your Task Force, not mine" [I can perhaps help you but I cannot make decisions for you]. With the passing of the new dress code, some teachers may bring some students with short skirts. When that happens, it's understood that Principal 1 is not going to get involved in measuring mini-skirts.

In addition to norm-setting techniques, what new norms can be identified that characterize new relationships in successful/restructured schools? What norms replace the traditional norms of teacher isolation, teacher classroom autonomy, and top-down decision-making?

This study on norm-setting by principals in effective schools can serve as a blueprint for new studies. Study findings can be used to construct training modules for principals and teachers committed to restructuring their schools. Findings also can be used to describe scenarios or visions of how principals and teachers relate with each other in our schools of the future.

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APPENDIX A

SECONDARY NORM-SETTING TECHNIQUES

Appeal/Persuasion

Principal appeals to professional standards: Isn't this what a good staff should do? (Teachers comply when convinced their psychic needs will be met.) Or, principal persuades teachers that compliance is in their best interests.

Mediator/Manipulator

Principal acts as a valve or pivot to channel feedback among parents, students, central office and community; s/he knows when to pass feedback along and to whom. Principal gives teachers the impression they set norm when, in fact, the principal initiated it.

Normative Distribution of Resources

Principal takes care of teachers doing good job (defined by norms). Principal consciously or unconsciously withholds resources from teachers not conforming to norms.

Teacher as Go-Between

Principal uses a teacher to convey verbally or through modeling the former's norm-setting expectations in situations where s/he might be perceived as over-stepping his/her authority.

Teacher Decision Making/Input

The teachers, in varying degrees, help in deciding upon a norm (understood here is the maxim that teachers will tend to comply and conform to a norm they help set). The principal elicits teacher input, thereby hoping to get consensus to a norm.

Teacher Peer Pressure

Teachers know their best group interests and pressure the few non-complying teachers to conform to a norm. (The principal is aware of this process and knows when not to interfere with this process.)

Recruitment/Selection of Teachers

Despite being in a lower hierarchal position, the principal is able to gain a relatively free hand from the central office in getting good teachers. Also, the school can establish a reputation throughout the school system for having hard-working teachers; therefore, teachers transferred for perceived incompetency do not want the central office to send them to this school.

Replacement/Transfer of Teachers

Principal replaces teacher who cannot (or will not) conform to norms.

Use of Workbook Series

Workbooks provide quantitative specification of teacher performance expected by the principal, parents, and teachers. Workbooks also can clarify, sequence, and coordinate grade objectives on a school-wide basis.

APPENDIX B

Groupings from the Norm Checklist*

Norm Number and Title	Prins. n = 6	% Tchs. n = 98
Group One: Norms defining the principal's obligations to teachers		
5. The principal's responsibility is to make the educational environment as conducive as possible to learning in the classroom.	6	80
16. The principal should spend as much time as possible in the classroom helping teachers.	(2)	(22)
17. The principal should support teachers even if that means trouble from the central office. Example: No student should get special treatment just because his father is on the board.	6	77
25. The principal should provide as many things as possible to facilitate the attainment of these goals [learning goals].	6	(66)
27. The principal will back the teacher (example, if parents question grades) if the teachers have sufficient (e.g., 8-10) grades for each student per grading period.	5	87
30. Unless there has been a "major transgression" (like failure to use school norms), it is the principal's responsibility to defend the teacher.	6	73
Group Two: Norms defining teacher behavior as professional educators		
1. Students read during designated periods of the week.	5	(58)
11. Classroom discipline is the responsibility of that teacher. The principal should be brought in only when absolutely necessary.	6	90
32. Physical punishment should be used only as a last resort.	6	93
33. Teacher planning and curricular improvement are essential to effective teaching.	6	92
34. A teacher's responsibility and commitment extends beyond the official school hours.	6	82
35. Teachers should take advantage of resource persons and teacher centers to help them provide learning paths for all students.	6	89

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Norm Number and Title	Prins. n = 6	% Tchs. n = 98
Group Three: Norms defining school's high expectations for students (among schools)		
3. "We never 'write-off' or give up on a student due to poor family background."	6	92
6. The goals of student achievement are stated in specified, behavioral objectives. Example: by end of grade three, 95 percent of students should be able to get 90 percent correct in word recognition (excluding certified learning disabled).	6	(36)
7. If students are not learning, it is the school's responsibility to improve learning.	6	73
8. If students are not learning but trying, it is the school's responsibility to improve learning.	6	78
10. The principal and teachers share high expectations for students' learning in that there is always a need for improvement.	6	92
13. Certain student behavior (however specified) is not to be tolerated by either principals or teachers.	6	85
19. "We expect success from our students and we give them immediate praise when they are right."	6	93
20. "Lack of effort by any student is not to be tolerated" (excluding certified learning disabled).	6	(68)
31. All children shall be maintained in regular programs to the greatest possible extent.	6	87
Group Four: Norms defining how principals affect teachers who affect students		
21. The emphasis a principal places on student achievement affects teachers' performance in classrooms.	6	(54)
22. The principal can increase a teacher's desire to improve student achievement by setting the model for teacher behavior.	6	(54)
23. The principal can increase teachers' self-concepts of their ability to improve student achievement.	5	72
26. The principal has defined and identified what good teaching is and communicates this to teachers in the classroom.	5	(61)

Norm Number and Title	Prins. n = 6	% Tchs. n = 98
Group Five: Norms defining a principal's authority of position		
12. "Everyone here does the job or does not stay. If you do not perform after all the help we offer, you are out. But there is nothing we would not do for a teacher within our ability."	4	(40)
18. To improve the school, the principal often takes both the initiative and responsibility in making unilateral decisions.	5	70
28. (The principal says): "There is a correct routine for many things in this school. This is exactly the procedure for our reports (of whatever kind)."	4	(67)
Group Six: Norms defining school climate		
2. The principal and teachers establish an atmosphere of discipline and order when students enter and leave the building.	6	95
4. Students should always be told whether their answers are right or wrong.	6	(65)
9. To improve and maintain a proper learning climate, teachers are expected to do certain, specific things. Examples are: A. being on time B. change bulletin boards monthly C. lesson plans	6	94
14. All events should start promptly.	5	(57)
15. "We are here to use as much class time on learning tasks as possible."	6	85
24. Principals and teachers together set behavioral learning goals for students.	6	(58)
29. Let's try to interrupt instructional classroom time as little as possible.	6	79

This table shows how the 35 norms were grouped for analysis.

The data indicate how many of the six principals and what percentage of the 98 teachers perceived each norm to occur within their school.

*Data indicating observer agreement consisting of fewer than four principals or less than 70 percent of teachers were circled.